

Amendments to the Claims

- 1) (Currently Amended) A method for the production of a pigment masterbatch by extrusion, wherein comprising the steps of:
 - a) metering continuously, a thermoplastic polymer in granular or powder form is ~~metered continuously~~ into a twin-screw extruder;
 - b) melting the polymer ~~metered in~~ is melted in the extruder to form a molten polymer;
 - c) metering, continuously, a pumpable pigment press cake containing pigment, water and/or organic solvent is ~~metered continuously~~ into the molten polymer through an inlet port of the extruder under elevated pressure, the pressure being sufficiently high that the boiling point of the water and/or organic solvent is higher than the internal temperature of the extruder in the region of ~~this~~the inlet port;
 - d) optionally, adding a flow improver ~~is added~~;
 - e) dispersing the pigment ~~is dispersed~~ into the molten polymer from the press cake by the action of shear forces;
 - f) removing the water and/or organic solvent ~~are removed~~ through at least one outlet port of the extruder, under elevated pressure, the pressure being sufficiently high that the boiling point of the water and/or organic solvent is higher than the internal temperature of the extruder in the region of ~~this~~the at least one outlet port; to a form a pigmented polymer melt; and

- g) discharging the pigmented polymer melt is discharged from the extruder, cooled and granulated.
- h) cooling the pigmented polymer melt to form a pigmented polymer; and
- i) granulating the pigmented polymer.

2) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the twin screw extruder is a corotating twin-screw extruder is used.

3) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the pigment press cake contains from 5 to 35% by weight of pigment.

4) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the outlet port(s) in f) is/are claim 1, wherein the at least one outlet port is~~ combined with one or more twin-screw locks.

5) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is a polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene or ethylene vinyl acetate.

6) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein the pigment is an organic pigment selected from the group consisting of the monoazo pigments, disazo pigments, disazo condensation pigments, laked azo pigments, triphenylmethane pigments, thioindigo pigments, thiazineindigo pigments, perylene pigments, perinone pigments, anthranthrone pigments, diketopyrrolopyrrole pigments, dioxazine pigments, quinacridone pigments, phthalocyanine pigments, isoindolinone pigments, isoindoline pigments, benzimidazolone pigments, naphthol pigments or and quinophthalone pigments.

7) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the flow improver is added and wherein the flow improver is a surface-active substance.

8) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein the pigment masterbatch contains from 10 to 70% by weight of pigment and from 30 to 90% by weight of thermoplastic polymer.

9) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein the heat of the water and/or solvent removed via the at least one outlet port is used for heating the press cake to be metered in step b.

10) (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~at least one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, wherein the removal of water and/or solvent in step f) is effected by means of fully automatic regulation of the pressure difference, preferably by a control valve.

11) (New) The method as claimed in claim 10, the fully automatic regulation of the pressure is achieved by a control valve.

12. (New) A method for the production of a pigment masterbatch by extrusion, comprising the steps of:

- a) metering continuously, a thermoplastic polymer in granular or powder form into a twin-screw extruder;
- b) melting the polymer in the extruder to form a molten polymer;
- c) metering, continuously, a pumpable pigment press cake containing pigment, water and/or organic solvent into the molten polymer through an inlet port of the extruder under elevated pressure, the pressure being sufficiently high that the boiling

point of the water and/or organic solvent is higher than the internal temperature of the extruder in the region of the inlet port;

- d) optionally, adding a flow improver;
- e) dispersing the pigment into the molten polymer from the press cake by the action of shear forces;
- f) removing the water and/or organic solvent through at least one outlet port of the extruder, under elevated pressure, the pressure being sufficiently high that the boiling point of the water and/or organic solvent is higher than the internal temperature of the extruder in the region of the at least one outlet port to a form a pigmented polymer melt; and
- g) discharging the pigmented polymer melt from the extruder.